

BE

West Yorkshire
Economic Growth
Conference

West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference

Conference Report

Tuesday, 18th September 2018
New Dock Hall,
Leeds

#WYEGC18

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Foreword



Keith Griffiths,
Managing Director,
Built Environment
Networking

With the summer ending it seemed fitting that we launched our Autumn/Winter schedule in our own backyard by hosting the second annual West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference at the fantastic New Dock Hall in the heart of Leeds. With over 350 delegates in attendance the schedule for the day was focused on how the public and private sector are working together to deliver economic growth and prosperity in the region; moreover, how the plethora of businesses in attendance can get in on the act.

The team at Built Environment Networking worked hard to secure an exciting line-up of speakers who in turn revealed over £5bn worth of future projects, much of which had yet to be procured.

With the region amidst a myriad of world class transformation driven by preparation for national infrastructure projects such as HS2 and Northern Power Rail, we were delighted to be joined by leaders and executives from all five of the council's that comprise the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, proving once again that our

company provides the ultimate national forum for organisation's to gather your market insight from and plan your business development opportunities.

As we continue to go from strength to strength we are always looking for businesses to partner with us; we want to help you expose your brand to the thousands of clients who attend our conferences on a regular basis. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me directly for a more in-depth discussion.

With our roots within the Yorkshire region we regularly hold conferences within its various towns and cities, we will be continuing the Leeds City region discussion in November 2018 while preparations for the 2019 instalment of the West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference are already underway so please be sure to monitor our website and social media channels for updates.

**Best wishes,
Keith**

keith.griffiths@built-environment-networking.com



From the Keynotes



Susan Hinchcliffe

Chair of
West Yorkshire
Combined Authority
@WestYorkshireCA

Raising productivity levels in West Yorkshire to the national average would boost the regional economy by 10%, the chair of its combined authority has told Built Environment Networking's West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference.

Delivering an opening keynote speech at the Conference, Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe said lagging productivity is the key factor pulling down incomes in the area compared to the national average.

NINETY PER CENT OF THE PROSPERITY GAP IS DOWN TO PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS. RAISING PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE WOULD ADD TEN PER CENT TO REGIONAL GDP.

Hinchcliffe, who is also leader of Bradford council, said that to help redress this gap, the combined authority has launched a pilot programme to help local businesses boost their productivity.

==Firms are invited to bid for capital grants of between £25,000 and £100,000 from the £500,000 available in the Leeds City Region Productivity Fund.

She said: "The information from the pilots will help to drive up productivity."

Hinchcliffe said decisions are also required on major transport investments, including the go ahead for the planned Northern Powerhouse Rail scheme that is designed to improve links between the north's major cities with new lines and upgrades of existing ones.

Hinchcliffe said: "The combined authority is concentrating on the strategic transport problems that have acted as a brake on the region's ambitions: we need major investment in the strategic transport network."

In the meantime, the combined authority is investing in improvements in the region's transport network, including £47m in park and ride schemes and £18m for bus links across West Yorkshire.

She said that projects already undertaken by the combined authority and the local enterprise partnership included 4,000 apprenticeships and a new railway station at Kirkstall Forge in Leeds

And Hinchcliffe said the region can take pride in having the "fastest growing" private sector in the country and Leeds' inclusion in the final shortlist of the three cities to host the new headquarter for Channel 4, the winner of which is due to be chosen shortly.

But all parts of the region must benefit from growth, she said: "We can't be successful unless all parts are working at maximum: Bradford has to be successful for the whole of the north to be successful."

"To be successful we can't have parts of the country not succeeding."

THE COMBINED AUTHORITY IS AWARE OF CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE REGION BUT WE ARE NOT DAUNTED.



Tom Younger

Cities Lead (North),
Uber
@Uber

Government 'has to make sure it sticks' to its latest east-west rail timelines.

Ride hailing services can complement public transport, Uber's North of England lead has claimed.

Tom Younger, Cities Lead – North of England at Uber said in his keynote speech that the company had conducted an analysis of journeys made by the company's passengers following the introduction of round the clock services on London Underground. He told delegates that following the roll out of the 'night Tube', Uber is being used by many passengers as a 'first and last option' before boarding or getting off the Underground in the suburbs. "We saw a massive decline in trips in Zone 1 but there were really huge pick-ups in Zones 2 and 3.

WE WANT TO BE A COMPLEMENT TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT: THE IDEA WILL BE TO PARTNER WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

More broadly, Younger said that services like Uber could tackle the congestion problems resulting from drivers making single occupancy journeys. He said that partly due to congestion, the typical motorist spends two weeks each year in a car, helping to fuel the 22% of global carbon emissions accounted for by motor

vehicles. Younger said that previous efforts to encourage car-pooling had not really taken off. But pointing to a study predicting that the introduction of self-drive cars would reduce the total number of vehicles on the road by 90%, he said the advent of driverless vehicles could encourage motorists to share trips.

And with the average car parked 95% of the time, the spaces they currently occupy could be liberated for more socially worthwhile uses such as housing and hospitals, he said: "If we can get people to share rides our cities will look entirely different."

IT'S EASY TO DEMONISE THE CAR BUT THE CAR ITSELF IS NOT THE PROBLEM IT'S HOW WE USE IT.

But he cautioned that this transformation is unlikely to happen in the short term. "Automation of vehicles has a long way to go and we're not too close to having them in the UK to do with regulatory and technological advances."

During his appearance on the infrastructure panel later at the conference, Younger said that Uber's 'phenomenal growth' in Leeds reflected the willingness of the city's population to embrace new technology.



Sean Jarvis

Commercial Director,
Huddersfield Town
@htafcdotcom

Huddersfield Town's success in reaching the football Premier League has put the West Yorkshire town on the world map, the club's Commercial Director told the conference. In his keynote speech, Sean Jarvis said tourists from as far afield as America and China are coming to the club's ground following its promotion to English football's top flight.

As well as delivering "huge civic pride in the town", sold out stadiums had benefited Huddersfield's tourism and hospitality businesses, he said: "If you get a visitor from

outside of the region they spend an average of £500 in your area."

Jarvis said direct investment by the club included £5.6m on bringing its stadium up to scratch and is now investing £20m in a new training facility.

He said that the higher profile that the club has become had helped to attract new businesses from overseas including boiler manufacture Viessman, which has become one of the club's sponsors.

The Northern Powerhouse

Panel Members:



Professor Colin Bamford
Emeritus Professor,
Huddersfield Business School
@HuddersfieldUni



Cllr Judith Blake
Leader, Leeds City Council
@LeedsCC_Help



Tom Younger
Cities Lead (North), Uber
@Uber



Neil Dewis
Director for Business
Transformation,
Yorkshire Water
@YorkshireWater



Henri Murison
Director, Northern
Powerhouse Partnership
NP_Partnership

CALL'S FOR NORTHERN TOWN'S TO BURY THE HATCHET

The north of England's towns and cities have been urged to bury their parochial rivalries in order to reap the potential benefits of the Northern Powerhouse.

Chairing the West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference's panel debate on the Northern Powerhouse, University of Huddersfield Emeritus Professor Colin Bamford raised concerns that smaller towns and cities in West Yorkshire will be left with the 'scraps' from the initiative. He said:

A LOT OF EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT LEEDS IS GOING TO GAIN A LOT MORE FROM THE NORTHERN POWERHOUSE THAN FOR EXAMPLE HUDDERSFIELD OR DEWSBURY AND THAT IT WILL BOOST LEEDS TO THE DETRIMENT OF OTHER PLACES.

But Henri Murison, director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, countered that investment in transport links between the region's major cities would deliver economic benefits across west Yorkshire.

Pointing to the electrification of the rail line between Huddersfield to Leeds, which is planned as part of the broader Transpennine line upgrade, he said: "Nobody would spend billions just giving people from Huddersfield to Leeds a better train line. It's good idea, but the economic rationale for making that a national priority is that it benefits the whole of the north. It's a mistake to keep thinking that we are competing against each other." "Local town pride in a football team is a great way to demonstrate pride in your place, but don't treat your local economy like your football team."

Cities are drivers for the wider regional economy, Murison said: "Leeds' footprint is significantly different to just the city: most people who work in Leeds don't live in Leeds."

LEEDS CITY-REGION ALREADY WORKS AS AN IDENTIFIABLE ECONOMIC FOOTPRINT. GIVE IT 20 YEARS AND THE NORTH OF ENGLAND WILL BE THE MEGA CITY WITH AN IDENTITY ON THE GLOBAL STAGE, BUT THAT WON'T REDUCE PRIDE IN FOOTBALL TEAMS AND TOWNS.

And the delivery of the Northern Powerhouse rail plans, which will involve a mix of new lines and upgrades to existing ones, will increase access to the jobs and opportunities offered by



Leeds, he said: "If you can unlock that you will find that what benefits Bradford benefits Huddersfield."

"That currently isn't true because connectivity doesn't allow that. You won't have to compete any more because you can genuinely collaborate." And while expressing confidence that cities like Bradford could succeed on their own, he said they were more likely to grow as part of a larger and more joined-up economic unit.

The existence of economic "cold spots" is a "huge barrier" to the growth of the wider region, Murison said: "In some communities of the north, your future is lot more positive than in others. It's economically necessary to ensure that the north as a whole benefits from the opportunities that are there."

IF WE CAN'T REBALANCE THE COUNTRY AND GET THE PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS WE NEED, WE WON'T HAVE THE MONEY TO INVEST IN THE SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

Judith Blake, leader of Leeds council, said the level of animosity between west Yorkshire communities had been 'striking' before the establishment of the combined authority. But collaboration had improved, she said: "There's a real recognition that we are all in this together and that it is something we should celebrate." "The argument for Transport for the North isn't just an argument for Leeds: it will bring benefits for all of us."

And the north's leaders had ensured that the region's transport issues are on Whitehall's agenda, said Blake: "The DfT (Department for Transport) now knows where the north is now: we are making so much noise that they are taking note."

But she added more work was needed to ensure national decision makers understand the economic benefits that transport investment could deliver in the north. "We have to get the government to understand the potential of the transport improvements."

The nature of the public transport system in Leeds means that the city is particularly reliant on national investment in the rail network, said Murison: "Leeds has a particular economy and a larger travel to work area and it is particularly dependent on heavy rail, which is a toxic mix if the national system doesn't deliver what you need for local growth."

"If we don't have more east-west tracking in Leeds, no one in the north east will benefit. Our stations are pretty much groaning. We need huge growth in public transport if we are to keep our cities moving." Blake also warned about the risk of depressed areas, like parts of West Yorkshire, losing access to EU regional fund following Brexit. She said:

THE BIGGEST FEAR IS THAT MONEY GET REPATRIATED TO WHITEHALL AND GETS FARMED OUT ON MOST UNFAIR FUNDING FORMULA AND PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES WILL SUFFER EVEN MORE FROM THAT LOSS OF MONEY COMING IN.



Infrastructure

Panel Members:



Naz Parker (Chair)

Director of Housing,
Kirklees Council
@KirkleesCouncil



Angela Baricle

Chief Officer for Economic
Development, Leeds
CityCouncil
@LeedsCC_Help



Phil Forster

Head of External Affairs,
Leeds Bradford Airport
@LBIAirport



Matt Rice

Principal Strategic Planner,
Network Rail
@networkrail



Barry White

Chief Executive,
Transport for the North
@Transport4North

LEEDS-MANCHESTER RAIL CAPACITY SET FOR FOUR-FOLD BOOST

The number of hourly seats on the route between Leeds and Manchester is set to quadruple by the mid-2020s, the chief executive of Transport for the North has said.

Barry White, whose organisation was set up in April to create a cohesive voice for northern England's transport system, told the West Yorkshire Economic Conference's infrastructure session that the delivery of new rolling stock next year will see a 'fantastic increase' in capacity on the line from 800 seats per hour to 2,000.

And this will increase again in the mid-2020s to 3,000, representing a quadrupling in capacity on the line between Leeds and Manchester.

White said the business case for the Northern Powerhouse Rail, which will involve a combination of upgrades to the existing network and construction of new lines, is to be submitted in December.

These improvements would have knock on benefits across the network, meaning for example that the journey from Leeds to Liverpool will be cut to an hour, he said:

These improvements would deliver knock on benefits for the wider economy of the north by creating a more integrated labour market, White said: "Creating greater east-west connectivity and better east-west rail capacity will give people choices about how they move about the north."

IT WILL CREATE LIQUIDITY OF EMPLOYMENT. IT WILL ALLOW PEOPLE TO TAKE A JOB IN LIVERPOOL AND LIVE HERE. DRAWING THE CITIES OF THE NORTH TOGETHER WILL ALLOW THE NORTH TO PERFORM BETTER AS A WHOLE.

"This puts Leeds right at the nexus of a hugely improved rail network." He said that TfN is also working on road studies to upgrade the A66 and a new Transpennine tunnel. And White said that while TfN itself had a small team it draws on 'several hundred' people at Network Rail to develop its plans for the NPR, including costing the project.

Angela Barnicle, Chief Officer for Economic Development at Leeds City Council, said the authority, had drawn up an integrated master plan for the city's mainline station, which will also be the terminus for HS2.

The number of passengers using the station is forecast to be grow to 70m over the next 20 years, which would put in

on a par with London Bridge station. She said that the masterplan's principles had been adopted into the council's planning policies.

The site of the HS2 station, which will occupy a 400 to 500m wide stretch of Leeds' South Bank, had been shifted half a km to the north to improve connections with the existing station and the city centre, said Barnicle: "When you step off you will have a seamless interchange with the airport."

Prior to the delivery of the HS2 station, she said the council is working on projects to improve transport connectivity within Leeds. Barnicle said the council had conducted a 'significant consultation exercise' during the summer on its 'Connecting Leeds' programme, which is designed to help the city's residents shift from the car to mass transit systems.

It includes plans for three new train stations serving the White Rose office park, Thorpe Park and Leeds Bradford airport, all of which are seen as key hubs for the future economic development of the city. The new station would mean the airport is more accessible than Liverpool's John Lennon airport from the two cities' respective city centres.

The plan also includes five bus priority corridors and a reworked Armley gyratory system. And the council has developed a new spaces strategy to improve the quality



of the city centre's public realm, including the creation of a new city square fronting onto Leeds mainline railway station, she said:

IT WILL GIVE A SPACE LARGER THAN TRAFALGAR SQUARE WHICH WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT ON THAT GATEWAY.

Barnicle also said that the proposed east Leeds orbital road would unlock a 5,000 home extension, which already has planning consent. She said early junction works are already being delivered and a public inquiry on the scheme is due to take place in February.

Matt Rice, Principal Strategic Planner at Network Rail, said small change to services could have knock on effects. "Leeds is a massive rail hub and is part of massive system so a change to timetables has massive impact in other parts of the country."

Phil Forster, Head of External Affairs at Leeds Bradford Airport, admitted that the facility needs to improve. He said:

A THRIVING REGION NEEDS A THRIVING AIRPORT IT'S UP TO US TO PLAY OUR PART, THIS AIRPORT'S POTENTIAL IS PHENOMENONAL.

The key improvements required are those connecting the airport and the rail network, Forster said: "We need to bring forward train links and reduce vehicle emissions," He also said that infrastructure investor AMP, which acquired the airport in 2017, has announced plans over the next three years to build a new terminal hall, including a new baggage handling facility and an improved food and beverage offer.

Universities and Colleges

Panel Members:



Tom Riordan (Chair)

Chief Executive,
Leeds City Council
@LeedsCC_Help



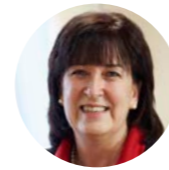
Professor Lisa Roberts

Deputy Vice Chancellor,
University of Leeds
@UniversityLeeds



Professor Liz Towns-Andrews

3M Professor of Innovation
and Director of Research
and Enterprise, University
of Huddersfield
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Professor Margaret House

Vice Chancellor,
Leeds Trinity University
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Colin Booth

Principal and Chief Executive,
Leeds City College
@leedscitycoll



Kelly McAllister

Head of Business
Development,
Bradford College
@BradfordCollege

LEEDS REVERSES BRAIN DRAIN, SAYS RIORDAN

Leeds has reversed the brain drain which has seen many regional cities lose graduates to the south of England, the city council's chief executive has said.

Tom Riordan, chairing the Universities panel debate at the West Yorkshire Economic Growth Conference, said work carried out to support Leeds' bid for the Channel Four headquarters had demonstrated the relative youth of the city's population.

THE CHANNEL FOUR PROCESS HAS REALLY DEMONSTRATED QUITE POWERFULLY HOW IMPORTANT AND DIFFERENTIATED OUR GROWTH IS COMPARED TO VIRTUALLY EVERY OTHER CITY IN THE UK.



"It's getting younger because we are attracting more students to universities and more are staying here.

"We've managed to reverse the traditional brain drain where lots of students came to Leeds and then felt they had to leave. We're now getting a brain gain with people coming to Leeds. It's a massive advantage for us."

He also said that universities are increasingly focusing on building up links with their local economies.

THERE WAS PERIOD WHEN UNIVERSITIES SAW THEIR FUTURE AS GLOBAL INSTITUTIONS AND BUSINESSES IN THEIR OWN RIGHT BUT FORGOT THE BASIS OF THE PLACE WHERE THEY HAD STARTED AND DEPEND ON.

Riordan said that the Leeds city-region's universities are a 'massive selling point' when talking to investors.



Professor Margaret House, vice chancellor of Leeds Trinity University, told delegates that 38% of graduates remain in Leeds and 72% within the city region. She also said that Leeds Trinity contributes £20.7m to the Leeds economy and £27.6m into that of the wider city-region.

This included ensuring that 'at least' half of the construction works carried out by the university would have been completed by local contractors with a total value of £7m.

In addition, House said, the university places planned maintenance of around £1m per annum with local business.

Kelly McAllister, Head of Business Development at Bradford College, discussed the introduction of the government's apprenticeship levy, which applies to all employers with a wage bill of £3 million-plus.

Reflecting the broader national picture, she said that the overall number of apprenticeships starts in the Leeds city-region had fallen by four percent.

But while the number of intermediate apprenticeships had declined by 12%, there had been a four and a 39% rise respectively in the volume of advanced higher level apprenticeship starts.

Professor Lisa Roberts, deputy vice-chancellor: research & innovation at Leeds University, highlighted its new £100m Sir William Henry Bragg development, which is due to open in September 2020.

The centre, which brings the university's engineering and physical science activities together into one location, will incorporate the new interdisciplinary Bragg Centre for Materials Research.

Roberts said the university's new Leeds Engineering Technology Campus, which is located on a 10-acre site near to the west Yorkshire depot for HS2, will include an Institute for High Speed Rail and System Integration.

Colin Booth, Principal & Chief Executive of Leeds City College, said that the further education sector is wrestling with major financial challenges. "Half of all colleges in the country are in some financial difficulties," he said, pointing to a report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies that showed the money allocated for 16 to 18-year-old college students has dropped 8% since 2010.

But the further education sector struggled for public attention, Booth said: "We've have had a problem with technical education for the last 70 years but can't remain focused on it.

EVEN WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHES A REVIEW OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION, ALL THE MEDIA TALKS ABOUT IS STUDENT TUITION FEES.



Developers

Panel Members:



Phil Laycock

Director, Built Environment
Networking
@BENetworking



Karen Lythe

Assistant Director for
Economy, Housing and
Investment, Calderdale
Council
@Calderdale



Gary Hetherington

Chief Executive of Leeds
CF &A, Leeds Rhinos and
Yorkshire Carnegie
@carnegierugby
@leedsrhinos



Thomas Weldon

Regional Manager, Henry
Boot Developments
@HenryBootDev



Ed Ellerington

Founder & Managing Director,
Packaged Living
@HenryBootDev

PLAN EARMARKS TWO NEW GARDEN SUBURBS

South East Calderdale has been earmarked for two new garden suburbs to help address West Yorkshire's wider housing shortage.

Karen Lythe, Assistant Director for Economy, Housing & Investment at Calderdale Council, told the Developers session at the West Yorkshire Economy Conference that the borough's draft local plan had identified Brighouse and Elland for the two extensions containing a total of 2,300 new homes.

The area also contains an advanced manufacturing enterprise zone with land for half million square ft of business space. The allocations are outlined in Calderdale's draft new plan, which is due to be submitted to the government for inspection by the end of 2018 a target date of adoption in 2021.

OVERALL THE PLAN SETS OUT ALLOCATIONS FOR 9,000 NEW HOMES AND 97 HECTARES OF EMPLOYMENT LAND.



Lythe also said the council is working with Sport England on a new leisure centre at Northbridge incorporating a swimming pool and other facilities. And she said that consent had been granted for the first site in the Halifax Living Project, which has a pipeline of two 250 new city centre properties. But congestion is a "real issue" in Halifax, Lythe said: "It's not the best encouragement to invest in the borough."

She said the investment to tackle the problem includes plans for a new train station at Elland together with bigger and better trains to service Halifax town centre, which has the busiest two platform station in Yorkshire. Lythe also said there are plans investment on the A29 and improvements for the A629.

Ed Ellerington, Founder and Managing Director of Packaged Living, said the recently launched build to rent specialist had conducted a successful capital raising programme over the last three months. He said that blocks being developed for Palmer's Packaged Living' are tailor designed for the needs of private rented households.

They will incorporate features such as loading bays, larger service lifts and wider corridors, which will make it easier for tenants to move in and out of the building.



Ellerington, who recently joined Palmer from Britain's biggest private landlord Grainger, said: "Historically, we never looked at that because nobody has actually operated these buildings."

Each building will also contain bookable dining rooms, library corners and outdoor terraces.

But he said that they would not incorporate cinemas and gyms because such facilities already often exist in the areas that the schemes are located in. And investors demanding that tenants put down a deposit is a 'mad idea' in the current day and age, said Ellerington:

NO-ONE ASKS ME TO PUT TEN PER CENT OF THE VALUE OF THE CAR DOWN WHEN I RENT A ZIPCAR: WE'VE MOVED SO MUCH FURTHER IN EVERY OTHER INDUSTRY.

But Brexit clouded prospects longer term for the sector, he said: "There are dark times looming that we will have to get through."



Thomas Weldon, Regional Director of Henry Boot Developments, said that a lack of infrastructure is holding back development along the M62 corridor in west Yorkshire. He said Henry Boot is about to deliver more than 2m sq ft of employment space at the Wakefield Hub, which is located at junction 30 of the M62, in units of up to 600,000 sq ft.

There is "strong demand" from occupiers in the region but sites are not coming forward due to a lack of infrastructure, said Weldon: "A new motorway junction to unlock these sites is important," he said.

QUESTIONING WHETHER SUFFICIENT AMBITION EXISTS IN WEST YORKSHIRE TO DRIVE GROWTH, HE POINTED TO THE NORTH EAST WHERE THE COMPANY HAS INCREASED FROM 1M SQ FT TO 4M SQ FT FLOORSPACE ON A BUSINESS PARK THAT IT IS DELIVERING.

He said Henry Boot's diverse portfolio also included The Chocolate Factory, a 185-apartment residential scheme in a converted former mill building acquired during the last downturn.

Gary Hetherington, chief executive of Leeds Rhinos & Yorkshire Carnegie, said that work is continuing on the refurbishment of Headingley's rugby and cricket grounds.

Hetherington said that the latest phase of the £44m development is the replacement of the ground's Northern stand with two new facilities. He said the ground is once again hosting Test match cricket regularly while the Leeds Rhino have been the most successful rugby club in the country for several years.

Housing

Panel Members:



Chris Calvert

Executive Director, Pegasus
@pegasuspg



Jenny Purple

Senior Strategic Land
Manager, Avant Homes
@AvantHomes



Cllr Shabir Pandor

Leader, Kirklees Council &
Kirklees Big Build
@KirkleesCouncil



Stewart Thomson

Land & Partnerships
Manager, Keepmoat Homes
@KeepmoatHomes



Sue Shirt

Executive Director,
Stonewater
@StonewaterUK



Andrew Weaver

Chief Executive,
Strata Homes
@homesbystrata

AVANT SETS GOAL OF DOUBLING YORKSHIRE OUTPUT

Housebuilder Avant Homes is aiming to double its delivery of new homes in West Yorkshire by 2023.

Jenny Purple, senior strategic land manager at the midlands-based company, told the housing session at the West Yorkshire Economy Conference that it aims to deliver 3,000 plots over the next three years with a goal of doubling its output within the next five. She said Avant currently has nine active outlets in west Yorkshire, two of which are located in Leeds and five in Wakefield.

But the delivery of the company's ambitions is under threat from planning delays, Purple said: "We support the agenda for delivery of new homes and the ambitious delivery targets, however we don't have a planning system that supports these objectives: the framework more often stops the delivery of housing growth."

Sue Shirt, executive director of Stonewater, said the housing association also aims to increase its output in Yorkshire to the tune of 200 per annum.

The new homes planned in Yorkshire are an element of the social landlord's wider target to boost the number of units it is developing nationwide to 1,000 next year and 1,500 by 2022.



This figure is nearly double the total of 800 dwellings per annum that the 32,000-home association currently builds. Shirt said that in Yorkshire, Stonewater currently has contracts onsite for 107 units with total expenditure of £10m.

Shabir Pandor, leader of Kirklees council, told delegates that the local authority's Big Build initiative of joint ventures with developers aims to deliver 10,000 homes in next five years.

Of these, the council aims to deliver 1,000 on land that it owns, including sites in Huddersfield and Dewsbury. He said the council is preparing four types of land packages to provide specialist accommodation for older people, mainstream housing, affordable/supported housing/SME and direct delivery of right to buy receipts

Andrew Weaver, chief executive of Sheffield-based housebuilder Strata, told delegates how the company has used social media to boost sales.

Much of Strata's Leeds city centre Flaunt development had been sold to Millennial age group buyers by using Facebook, he said, adding that the company now achieves 30% of its sales via referrals.

"We've definitely built a powerful relationship with customers. A lot now sell our homes for us.



AT TIMES, IT FEELS LIKE A DIGITAL EVENTS COMPANY THAT HAPPENS TO BUILD HOUSES.

Weaver said the family owned housebuilder has a total of 21 sites, either in the pipeline or under development.

A further eight are in the pipeline, including the former Vickers tank factory in Crossgate, Leeds, on which Strata has recently exchanged contracts.

Thirteen are already on site, including Wakefield Westgate and the Seacroft Hospital. Strata is working with Keepmoat on the 26-acre former hospital site, which is being brought forward as part of the Leeds council's Brownfield Land Programme.

Stewart Thomson, land & partnerships manager at Keepmoat, said his company and Strata had been appointed preferred developers on the package of 13 brownfield development sites across East Leeds.

The entire programme aims to deliver 960 new-build homes over five phases, the last one of which is due to be completed in the summer of 2025. Keepmoat is delivering 610 homes of these homes over ten of the sites, 15% will be affordable. Thomson also highlighted the New Bolton Woods Urban Village between Bradford and Shipley in the in the Canal Road Corridor.

The development has benefited from £3.6m worth of infrastructure support through the Leeds City Region Growth deal.



Keepmoat has outline consent at the village for 1,000 new homes, a local shopping centre, a health centre, as well as a new public square and a small food store. He said a new Costa Coffee café and supermarket are opening in 2019 and the existing primary school is being expanded to two form entry in order to cater for the urban village's development.

This strategic development programme approach could be rolled out across other local authority areas to deliver marginal or unviable brownfield assets, Thomson said: "There's plenty of public sector land, particularly brownfield, that pooled together can add some value."

But many private sector landowners, particularly in intermediate or regeneration housing areas, suffered from inflated expectations about their land's worth with knock on consequences for the viability of schemes, he said: "Many owners have pre-2008 aspirations: we need them to understand their assets aren't worth as much."

And the government's recent overhaul of the National Planning Policy Framework had created uncertainties around the housing need assessment figures in local plans, Thomson said: "Local authorities are now looking at local plans, which creates uncertainty." Other potential delivery headaches include the shortage of materials and labour, the planned end of Help to Buy initiative in 2021 and Brexit.

West Yorkshire Question Time

Panel Members:



Cllr Tim Swift
Leader, Calderdale Council (Chair)
@Calderdale



Lorna Pimlott
Director of Sponsorship & Policy, Phase 2 of HS2
@HS2Ltd



Jacqui Gedman
Chief Executive Officer, Kirklees Council
@KirkleesCouncil



Shelagh O'Neill
Director of Economy and Development, Bradford Council
@bradfordmdc



Steve Harris
Regional Director for Yorkshire, Lloyds Banking Group
@LBGNews



Pete Massey
Director for the North, Arts Council
@ace_national

BREXIT WRANGLING THREATENS TO DELAY HS2, WARNS PROJECT EXECUTIVE

The Brexit parliamentary process could hold up efforts to deliver the northern leg of High Speed 2, a senior executive at the project has warned.

Lorna Pimlott, Director of Sponsorship & Policy for phase 2 of HS2 told the concluding session of the West Yorkshire Economy Conference that the hybrid bill for the Birmingham to Crewe section of the fast rail link is due to go to the House of Lords in January. And she said the legislation for the 2B routes to Leeds and Manchester, which she described as the "biggest ever hybrid bill", is due to enter Parliament in 2020.

However, the bills, which are designed to pave the way for the construction of the line's northern legs, could be crowded out by Brexit-related legislation, Pimlott said: "The biggest threat is delay. It will make our time in Parliament difficult. The real biggie is making sure that we keep on schedule."

But the new line would open economic opportunities for the north, Pimlott said:

ACCESS TO NEW MARKETS WILL BE VITAL SO THAT WE CAN COMPETE: HS2 WILL ENABLE US TO REDUCE TIMES AND COMPETE GLOBALLY.



The session also heard calls for the government to approve the 'One Yorkshire' devolution deal in order to enable England's biggest historic county to keep pace with other regions. Councils across Yorkshire have been pushing for a single deal following the unravelling of packages for west and south Yorkshire.

Steve Harris, Regional Director for Yorkshire at Lloyds Banking Group, said greater devolution would help to improve decision making.



ONE OF THE BARRIERS TO ECONOMIC GROWTH IS NOT HAVING PEOPLE CLOSER TO DECISIONS. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO KEEP FALLING BEHIND. OTHER REGIONS THAT HAVE DEVOLUTION ARE CRACKING ON AND GETTING INVESTMENT.

"It's important that we get it sorted out and quickly."

Pete Massey, Director for the North at the Arts Council, said devolution is necessary because areas lacking it are 'missing out on investment'. He said: "It is clear that Mayors have a strategic vision and we are losing out."

Cllr Tim Swift, leader of Calderdale Council, said that while developing a devolution deal for Yorkshire is "challenging", it must be delivered. But in the absence of a West Yorkshire devolution deal the quality of partnership within the region had improved, he said.

Jacqui Gedman, chief executive of Kirklees Council, said that West Yorkshire had seen a growing recognition of the importance of partnership over the last two years since the



collapse of the region's devolution deal. "Over the last two years, organisations have been coming together to do what's right for the region."

Shelagh O'Neill, Director of Economy & Development at Bradford council, said:

IF WE DON'T HARNESS THE ENERGY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IT WILL BECOME A PROBLEM.



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